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SIPDIS

STATE FOR PRM, GENEVA FOR RMA, ABIDJAN AND NAIROBI FOR  
REFCOORDS, ROME FOR INS, CONAKRY FOR RIOS

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SUBJECT: UNHCR/ACCRA READOUT ON POSSIBLE P-2 GROUP IN GUINEA

(U) 1. Summary: UNHCR/Accra officer Catherine Hammon provided a read-out on her recent trip to Guinea to assess refugee groups on possible resettlement needs. Hammon was positive that some 600 refugees from both Conakry and Dabola could be categorized and identified clearly as a Priority 2 group for referral to the USG. While hard-file case review would need to be conducted due to shortcomings in registration efforts, if given the proper attention, UNHCR could work speedily to identify the group for resettlement. USG support for this effort is encouraged in order to not only help this group in need but also to strengthen the legitimacy of UNHCR/Accra's regional resettlement role in West Africa. End summary.

(U) 2. Regional Refugee Coordinator for Admissions met with Catherine Hammon and Peter Trotter of UNHCR/Accra's regional resettlement division to discuss findings from Hammon's recent mission to Guinea. The purpose of Hammon's trip was to assess the potential for identifying groups in the country for third country resettlement. Hammon focused on Liberian refugees who had been multiply displaced within Sierra Leone and Guinea. Hammon determined that some 200 were living in Conakry while another 400 resided in Dabola.

(U) 3. The 200 Liberian refugees in Conakry have been through a registration but the electronic data gathered on them by UNHCR is minimal. Since UNHCR sees the condition of quote multiply displaced end quote as the identifier in recognizing these refugees as a set group it is imperative to research hard copy files to determine the extent to which they were displaced.

(U) 4. The 400 Liberian refugees in Dabola have also been through a registration and once again, the electronic data gathered is minimal. Hammon believes the actual number of refugees in this group might be smaller than the commonly accepted figure of 650, as some may have registered twice in hopes of getting additional ration cards. As a result, Hammon has asked the UNHCR officer in Dabola to conduct an informal information gathering exercise of the Liberians in the camp to determine actual numbers and history of flight. Hammon stressed that the exercise was not/not conducted in a manner that would indicate an interest by UNHCR in eventual resettlement of the population. While the totals are not in, Hammon expects the number of 650 to reduce to approximately 400 who would meet the definition of multiply displaced.

(U) 5. Since the UNHCR database for both groups does not capture the origin of displacement, Hammon feels it would be necessary to cross-reference hard copy files that are being stored in Conakry. In addition, she feels that UNHCR/Freetown could be called upon to assist as well since it maintains some old documents on this caseload from when it was in Sierra Leone. Acknowledging that it could be a tedious task, Hammon nevertheless is optimistic that the necessary information could be gathered within a couple months.

(U) 6. Comment: Hammon's assessment mission to Guinea is the first in hopefully more missions to come from UNHCR/Accra's regional resettlement office. Indeed, this is the signal that needs to be sent out indicating a tangible change in UNHCR thinking on resettlement in the region. While the population is not necessarily large in comparison to past P-2 groups, it is important that the USG support this effort in order to not only assist this needy group but to further legitimize UNHCR/Accra's role in the region and capitalize on the momentum set for identifying P-2 groups in W. Africa. End comment.

YATES